

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

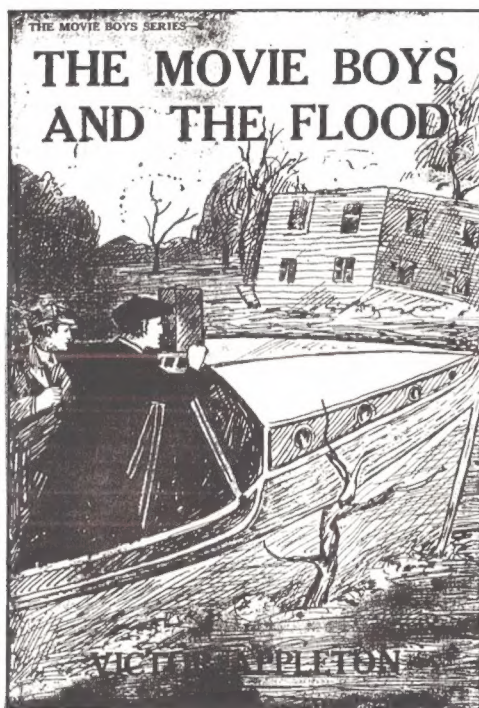
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## THE BOY SCOUTS VERSUS THE SERIES BOOKS — CONCLUSION

By John T. Dizer



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MOVIE BOYS SERIES

Publisher: Garden City Publishing Co., Garden City, NY. Issues: 17. Dates: January 2, 1926, to April 28, 1927. Schedule: Every four weeks. Size: 7 7/8 x 5 1/8". Pages: 200-225. Price: Not shown (probably 15¢ to 25¢). Illustrations: Colored pictorial Cover. Contents: Reprints of two cloth-bound series, MOTION PICTURE CHUMS Series and MOVIE BOYS Series.

# THE BOY SCOUTS VERSUS THE SERIES BOOKS — PART III

## The "Other" Scout Books and How It All Came Out

By John T. Dizer

Before addressing Mathews's final attempt at reforming boys' reading it might be well to address what is supposed to be one of the major reasons for the conflict, the unofficial "Boy Scout" series books. These series were as varied as the activities of the Scouts and ranged from the excellent to a level which even I have trouble accepting. The boys had no trouble, however, but the BSA did, although the BSA very seldom, in my reading, identified any Scout series as inferior, but rather attacked the "fiction factory" operation and "mile-a-minute" fiction in general. According to Fisk, Hudson and my records, between 1911 and the end of 1914 (when "Blowing Out the Boys' Brains" appeared) there were a maximum of no more than 20 Scouting series in print. Many of them never had more than four volumes and many of the authors were acceptable to the BSA. As one example, Thornton W. Burgess wrote a series of four Scouting books for which he sought val from the BSA, which to me are better than any of Fitzhugh's.<sup>73</sup> Eaton wrote a series which ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime.<sup>74</sup> Burton converted his BOBS HILL BRAVES to BOY SCOUTS. And so on. And as far as numbers go I find a total of about 112 Scouting novels including individual books and only nine series which had four or more titles in print by the end of 1914. These major series are:

"Author"	Books issued thru 1914 and total in series	First and Last date of issue	Publishers	Actual Authors thru 1914
Carter	8 of 12	1913-1917	Burt	Rathborne (8)
Douglas	7 of 10	1913-1919	N.Y. Book Co.	Rathborne (6)
Fletcher <sup>75</sup>	12 of 12	1913 (all)	Donohue	Rathborne (6)
Maitland-Durston	12 of 24	1912-1919	Saalfeld	Dey (3), Wolff (4), Duffield (1), Durston (4)

This series was reorganized and reprinted under additional names (Cobb, Blaine, Fiske and Griggs) until 1927 with a total, according to Chenu, of 84 separate titles.<sup>76</sup>

Payson	4 of 14	1911-1918	Hurst	John H. Goldfrap
Ralphson <sup>77</sup>	15 of 20	1911-1916	Donohue	Ralphson
Shaler	10 of 20	1914-1918	Hurst	Unknown
Stuart	6 of 14	1912-1922	Reilly & Britton	H. L. Saylor (5) G. B. Madison (1)
Victor	8 of 8	1911-1913	Chatterton	Unknown

Since Rathborne also wrote three of the BANNER BOY SCOUT series before the end of 1914 it means that he had written at least 23 Scouting books, Ralphson had 15, Saylor had five, Goldfrap, Wolff and Durston each had four, Dey had three, and Duffield and Madison one each, of the known authors in the major series. None of these series seems up to Syndicate quality but none is as bad (at least by 1914) as the *Fortune* comment that "these fifty-cent hair-raisers would lead small boys to sniff at anything



so mundane as building campfires or tracking woodchucks."<sup>78</sup> Few of the boys even travelled outside the country or captured a single spy though they certainly were active and fearless youth. The Ralphson and Goldfrap Scouts both got to the Canal Zone, the Payson Scouts came under fire in Mexico and the Ralphson group got to the Arctic Circle, all by 1914, but these Scouts were more active than most. The major surge both in numbers of "unauthorized" Scouting books as well as in valiant adventures came *after* "Blowing Out the Boys' Brains" and the beginnings of the EBL. But we should not forget that it was the BSA approved TOM SLADE as well as the Maitland, Payson, Ralphson et al Scouts who fought so valiantly in World War I and would have won the war if the BOY ALLIES hadn't won it for them.

It is understandable that Mathiews/West would not directly attack the "undesirable" Boy Scout series or the publishers in the days before the BSA received their own charter and legal right to the Boy Scout name and about everything else connected with Boy Scouts. It is hard to understand, however, particularly in light of West's action against the Girl Scouts, the Tion Army and the United States Boy Scouts after 1916, why he permitted the "unauthorized" use of the Boy Scout name in series books. However, as previously noted, the Saalfeld Maitland-Durstun series which started in 1912 continued until 1919 (THE BOY SCOUTS IN THE WAR ZONE; OR, ON THE FIELDS OF FRANCE) and was revised and reissued in 1921 and again in 1927. The one specific reference to a particular series which I have seen appears in COMMUNITY BOY LEADERSHIP (1922) where Mathiews quotes a mother complaining about BOY SCOUTS OF THE AIR AT EAGLE CAMP as an example of a book which debauches and vitiates the imagination.<sup>79</sup> This book was published back in 1912 by Reilly & Britton. The BOY SCOUTS OF THE AIR series also continued adding new books until 1922.

Occasionally the Boy Scouts endorsed Boy Scout Series Books. Hurst published an ad featuring a letter from E. F. McLean, President, New England Boy Scouts (Incorporated in Massachusetts) dated Boston, July 22, 1911, "Gentlemen: I have read a copy of BOY SCOUTS OF THE EAGLE PATROL published by you. I consider it one of the best boys books I have ever read, and while it is particularly related to the Boy Scout movement, covering as it does almost the entire range of Boy Scout activities, it is just the sort of literature every boy ought to read. Better than this, it is just the sort of book every boy will read if he can get hold of it. In this particular it is like the Scout movement, it appeals to the real live boy. I trust you will give us more of this sort." This was volume one of Payson's (Goldfrap) Boy Scout series and Hurst certainly obliged, with 13 more books in the series. McLean was a better prophet than Mathiews. Of course the New England Boy Scouts were not the BSA.<sup>80</sup>

Mathiews' most lasting contribution was probably commissioning Percy Keese Fitzhugh as a more-or-less in-house writer to produce BSA approved series books. These series were supposed to be in direct competition with the "mile-a-minute" offerings of Stratemeyer and other juvenile publishers. "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em" was the approach. In fact Murray claims the TOM SLADE books were developed to counter the TOM SWIFT books.<sup>81</sup> The similarity in names was no coincidence. On the other hand my early copy of Tom has TOM SLADE BOY SCOUT OF THE MOVING PICTURES on the title page and also "adapted and illustrated from the Photo Play 'The Adventures of a Boy Scout.'" It was "produced and copyrighted by the Wedepict Motion Picture Corporation."<sup>82</sup> The earliest copies of Tom refer to World Film Corporation rather than Wedepict.<sup>83</sup> A Scoutmaster from New Hampshire, writing in the November 1, 1915, issue of *Scouting* says, "I have seen no recommendation, in any of your publications, of the film, 'The Adventures of a Boy Scout,' produced by the World

Film Corporation of New York." His troop showed the film before an audience of perhaps 250 in the local theatre and cleared \$15. He describes it in some detail and it certainly sounds like TOM SLADE but the name is not mentioned. "I am sure it will give the people a great sympathy and interest in the Movement."<sup>84</sup> This seems to show that the film did exist and was circulated in 1915 but that National wasn't involved or they would have been pushing it. Anyway TOM SLADE appeared in book form, also in 1915 and Fitzhugh was off and running. Fitzhugh had written six juveniles and three singles before he wrote ALONG THE MOHAWK TRAIL in 1912. This book on Scouting appealed enough to Mathiews that it was included in the EBL although not in the first 25 titles issued. It was added the following year. Fitzhugh also had written FOR UNCLE SAM, BOSS (1913) and IN THE PATH OF LA SALLE (1914) before he was tapped by Mathiews. The *Fortune* article claims Fitzhugh was working on historical encyclopedias for Harper's when Mathiews hired him. His Scouting experience was limited but his attitude was good and his writing style appealed to the boys. Quoting *Fortune* again, "It was the fifty-cent material but presumably put together more adroitly than a Syndicate yarn."<sup>85</sup> This, of course, is a matter of opinion. I personally rank Fitzhugh no higher as a writer than the best Syndicate writers and certainly no better than "Leo Edwards" but his books were pleasant reading when I was younger and I still enjoy them. They generally follow good Scouting practice and emphasize the proper virtues. They were popular because they had plenty of action and were in a series where the reader could continue the adventures of his heroes for book after book. Since I make so many value judgments on the various series and books I should probably explain—some will say apologize—that my collection contains every book mentioned in this article, Scout series, Fitzhugh series, etc., and that, for better or worse, I have also read all of them.

It is a little odd that although TOM SLADE appeared in 1915 no others appeared until 1917 (two volumes) and 1914 (four more). The series continued until 1930 with 19 volumes. In the spin-off series, ROY BLAKELY had 17 volumes, PEE WEE HARRIS had 13, WESTY MARTIN had eight, MARK GILMORE had three, and there were six separate titles as well. The last titles were copyrighted in 1931 although Fitzhugh wrote his HUGH LLOYD series after that time. No one has recorded Mathiews' attitude about his favorite author writing under a pen-name but by that time Mathiews probably didn't care.

In addition to being books which had a real appeal to boys the Fitzhugh books had the written approval of the BSA and the promotional efforts of the BSA behind them. Although publication figures vary—they sold 4,000,000 (Mathiews) or 3,000,000 (*Fortune*)—the books were more popular than most of the competing series. Sullivan notes a total of 98 hardcover books by Fitzhugh.<sup>86</sup> Fitzhugh was no more a camper than was James E. West but it didn't matter in either case.

There were serious lapses in some of Fitzhugh's scouting books, both in plausibility and in morals. In TOM SLADE ON THE RIVER the Scouts rescue and rehabilitate a boy who had supposedly been drowned and restore him to the bosom of his family. There were slight complications since the boy was the real owner of the Scout's boat which had been given them in the previous book by the boy's father because he was sure his son was dead, but it all worked out nicely.<sup>88</sup>

WIGWAG WEIGAND in the book of the same name, had adventures worthy of the MOTOR BOYS. He went to the circus and feeling an urgent need for money rode the wild Australian horse, "Hurricane," thereby winning \$5,000. "It was pandemonium." He then gave the money to his friend to cover the



\$5,000 embezzlement which was the cause of Wig's urgent need. Wig shortly, with a little help from the game warden, tracked down and captured two poachers who had murdered the previous game warden. He then saved Temple Camp, or at least the Scouts, from being washed away by signalling a warning with his flashlights. He used two flashlights and sent semaphore which is certainly unusual but nothing for "Wigwag."<sup>89</sup> So much for plausibility and mile-a-minute fiction.

There were much more serious lapses, both in plausibility and in ethics, in the five TOM SLADE books published in 1918 and 1919. Attitudes of course. Soderbergh says of these books, "In them Tom was depicted as a fearless, immortal boy-soldier whose deeds won the war single-handedly (thanks to his BSA training) and whose hatred of the enemy burned brightly in his young heart. Slade was a Boy Scout on the rampage in Europe. He relished every moment and added to the carnage when possible. He gave no quarter, and expected none in return. In a period when nationalistic pomposity was thought to be patriotic fervor, Tom Slade was a nonpareil."<sup>90</sup> Holsinger feels differently. "Tom does go, [to war] and though he does have his share of adventures, few could be called anything but starkly realistic. Tom's war, indeed, is mud, and death, and a good many wishes that he had remained with his Scouting friends."<sup>91</sup> Ironically, the Fitzhugh books I remember best from my early Scouting days are the World War I TOM SLADES and I made no distinction between them and the BOY ALLIES. This would indicate that the impression of war as a desperate and glorious adventure was what impressed me most in those books. A recent and more objective rereading leads me to lean towards Soderbergh's view. The sustained virulent anti-German attitudes and the mile-a-minute implausible adventures are as bad as anything in juvenile fiction of that time. It is quite true that these were the attitudes of the time but it is equally true that instead of improving the quality and moral tone of series books, Fitzhugh had fouled Mathiews' nest. The dedication of the second of the five war stories, TOM SLADE WITH THE BOYS OVER THERE, says, "To F.A.O. The real Tom Slade, whose extraordinary adventures on land and sea put these storied exploits in the shade, this book is dedicated with envious admiration." F.A.O. must have been quite a guy to do more than TOM SLADE.

Although Fitzhugh reverted to more reasonable Scouting activities in his later books, the Mathiews/West battle had essentially been lost. The BSA didn't officially admit it for many years. The 1922 HANDBOOK FOR SCOUTMASTERS is specific as to the censorship duties of the Library Department. "The Library Department shall pass upon all lists of books which may be published in any of the handbooks or other literature of the Boy Scouts of America as books worthwhile for boys to read, and through the Directors of the Department, serve in an advisory capacity to other libraries and those engaged in work for boys in the selection of desirable books and the elimination of books not desirable. The Department shall cooperate in so far as may be practicable with other agencies, both educational and commercial, in securing the largest circulation of books and other reading matter specifically endorsed by the Boy Scouts of America. It shall do such other things which will further extend the influence of the reading of wholesome books."<sup>92</sup>

I have already mentioned the "Things a Scout Executive Can Do," in the SCOUT EXECUTIVE'S MANUAL. The 1929 SCOUTMASTER'S HANDBOOK says, "His fiction reading will help shape his mind. Hence the Scoutmaster should supervise and direct, as far as possible, the boys' reading." Under "Precautions" (as noted earlier), "Point out to the Scouts the foolishness of the 'blood and thunder' dime novels."<sup>93</sup> But the spark was gone. The Winetka survey of 1926 showed that 98% of the children read fifty-centers

and most of them added that they liked TOM SWIFT best.<sup>94</sup> The sales figures corroborate this. Although the Fitzhugh books were credited with helping the growth of Scouting significantly, and "good books" were still important, the BSA had other, more important things to do than to censor, or "guide," if you prefer, a boy's reading. It was about time they realized it.

From my reading of available facts Stratemeyer really played the windmill to Mathiews' Don Quixote. He took no action against Mathiews/BSA and he did little to defend himself. He did put out a list of his recommended titles which did not quite agree with Mathiews.<sup>95</sup> With all the vituperation from Mathiews it would have been expected to see more retaliation. There was just a little. The Stratemeyer Syndicate issued a three volume series called the Y.M.C.A. BOYS in 1916 and 1917. The C&L description reads, "This new series relates the doings of a wide-awake boys' club of the Y.M.C.A., full of good times and every-day practical Christianity. Clean, elevating and full of fun and vigor, books that should be read by every boy." Sad to say, boys weren't that much interested in practical Christianity but at least the series lasted longer than the WHITE RIBBON BOYS temperance series of 1915 by "Raymond Sperry, Jr." (I believe Howard Garis) which collapsed after one book. This was also a Stratemeyer Syndicate offering by C&L and the C&L description says, "This new series deals with the great modern movement for temperance. Clean-out, up-to-date stories that will please all growing boys and do them a world of good." It appears that Mathiews could rail all he wanted to against TOM SWIFT & Company, with no success whatsoever, as long as the boys thought the books were good. But when Mr. Stratemeyer published both a YMCA and a temperance series—ones which Mr. Mathiews certainly should have approved—the boys certainly didn't. But back to the retaliation. As I noted in an article many years ago, "In THE YMCA BOYS OF CLIFFWOOD, by Brooks Henderley, a part of the story concerns an unpleasant and narrow-minded librarian who will not permit wholesome, action-filled boys' books of good moral tone in the town library, so the YMCA boys, with help, start their own library. Eventually, the librarian sees reason, of a sort."<sup>96</sup> But this is the only reaction in print (if it is reaction) that I have found by Stratemeyer to the broadside attacks made by Mathiews. To me it seems to show that the Great Book War was in the eyes of the critics only and that it was a minor irritation to Edward Stratemeyer. Or possibly it shows that he was too much of a gentleman to respond to an attack in which he had nothing to gain.

Since Howard Garis was one of the principal writers for the Syndicate and author of all the TOM SWIFTS of that period and, I believe, the GREAT MARVEL and MOTOR BOYS Series as well—all of which were roundly condemned by Mathiews—he might have been expected to have been annoyed by the BSA. Apparently either he was an unusually kindly man (which is his reputation) or he felt no effect from the BSA attack. As evidence of his attitude the Scouts appear very favorably though in a minor role in the RICK AND RUDDY Series (five volumes published by Milton Bradley Co., 1920-1924). This series was published under Howard R. Garis's own name and featured a boy and his dog. Rick, the boy, became a Scout but Ruddy, the dog, was ineligible. Ruddy behaved much better, however, than some Scouts I have known. Incidentally, the Scout activities as chronicled in the RICK AND RUDDY Series, which were decidedly outdoorsy, woodsy and rustic would have delighted the heart of Ernest Thompson-Seton and should have pleased even Franklin K. Mathiews.

Howard Garis also wrote one book which dealt extensively with Scouting, CHAD OF KNOB HILL, THE TALE OF A LONE SCOUT, published in 1929. I



consider it one of the finest books Garis ever wrote and an excellent Scout book. The dedication reads in part, "To the country Boys of America and all Lone Scouts who are now privileged, through the Boy Scouts of America, to obtain the advantages of Troop Scouting in rural communities, this book is dedicated."<sup>97</sup> This is really most generous under the circumstances. I wonder what Mathiews thought of this book and if he ever connected Garis with the many series which Garis had authored for the Stratemeyer Syndicate.

Contrary to some writers I find no significant change in the Syndicate series books after the Stratemeyer-Mathiews joust. Stratemeyer was fortunate in attracting McFarlane and Mildred Wirt and other good writers but the format and production methods were the same. Stratemeyer continued to dominate the field until his death in 1930 and his daughters continued his success.

After his last Scouting book in 1931 Fitzhugh published his HAL KEENE and SKIPPY DARE non-Scouting series in the '30s. He died in 1950 at Oradell, New Jersey.

Soderbergh says that Mathiews stayed with the BSA as Chief Scout Librarian until 1925, suffered a nervous breakdown and retired from the BSA in December, 1928.<sup>98</sup> Fisk shows Mathiews as Editor of the BOY SCOUTS' YEARBOOK Series through 1945 with seven Scouting-oriented books published between 1929 and 1931. Fisk also shows Mathiews as author of a number of Scouting books.<sup>99</sup> Since Mathiews was editor, only, of my examples of these books, I believe Mathiews edited most of the books listed under his name. I do not have, however, examples later than 1934. Mathiews died in Montclair, New Jersey, also in 1950, less than two months after Fitzhugh.

In all fairness to the protagonists—Stratemeyer, Mathiews, Fitzhugh and West—it should be noted that all of them have been described as kindly and honorable gentlemen. They were honest in their convictions and they all certainly "fought the good fight."

Many have written about the results of Mathiews/West "good reading" campaign but their factual evidence seems to me to be limited. It is my personal belief that the "good books" campaign was strongest in the 1913-1917 period, was diverted by the World War I emphasis, and never really regained momentum, dwindling almost entirely away in the depression years. I refer to the campaign itself. As far as actual impact on the Boy Scouts, Scouters and even Scout Executives, I find no evidence that the campaign had any real effect whatsoever, other than providing additional books to read. There is no question but what booksellers were temporarily upset, librarians were upset and the American Library Association was upset. However, if you read old issues of the *Library Journal* and similar publications you might well believe that librarians are always upset! I do not concur with Soderbergh's statement that, "Franklin Mathiews' vibrant crusade did awaken professionals to the limitations of sub-literature, igniting a tradition of watchfulness that persists to this day."<sup>100</sup> This tradition of watchfulness (a much kinder word than the one I would have used) has existed since at least the 1870s and Mathiews' efforts were just one skirmish in the on-going war.

I see three reasons as to why Mathiews' campaign never really hit the boy Scouts themselves. The first is that the National BSA establishes as policy, particularly in an area which is not perceived as being particularly relevant to Scouting, tends to be ignored or at least downplayed at the Council, District and Troop level. The second is that the best leaders of boys tend to emphasize camping, leadership and character development and tend to reject the kinds of arguments put forth by Mathiews and other librarians and reformers concerning desirable reading. The third

is that most Scouts' minds are as healthy as their stomachs. They will read anything they want to, accept the fun and action and the stuff that appeals to them and ignore the rest. They don't want or need a special reading diet anymore than they want a special food diet.

As an indication of what really went on in Scouting at all levels in the early years I have relied heavily on my Father. The handbooks from 1910 on, the Scoutmasters handbooks and the Scout Executive's handbook were all his books which he used in Scouting. He started as a Scout in 1909 in East Weymouth, Massachusetts, using first the Baden-Powell handbook and then the 1910 Seton handbook. He served as Scoutmaster of three troops in the World War I period and served in the 1920s as Scout Executive for the Windham-Windsor Council in Vermont. He left Scouting when he couldn't support a family on the salary but served again as Scoutmaster in the '30s and finally after World War II served as District Commissioner and District Chairman. I have never known a man more dedicated to Scouting. In addition he served at various times as State Probation and Parole Officer in Vermont and Supervising Federal Probation Officer in New Jersey. He knew boys thoroughly and understood their problems. I had many discussions with him over a number of years about juvenile books, Scouting, censorship, Mathiews and the whole field of boys' reading. Fortunately, I also taped his recollections. To the best of his memory he did none of the things Mathiews recommended. He never made recommendations as to what books boys should or shouldn't read and saw no reason why he should. He was aware of Mathiews but ignored him. And this, I believe, is the key to the whole situation. Most responsible Scouters ignored Mathiews. His arguments simply do not make sense to a rational mind (assuming mine is rational). My father, incidentally, had read Henty, Castlemon and Alger as a boy. I know since I still have his books.

My uncle, Leone E. Smith, had an equally distinguished career in Boys Club work and in 1922 established Camp Sangamon, a private boys camp in Vermont which is still flourishing. He also served as head of the Weeks School (Vermont Reform School) at Vergennes, and like my father, knew boys of all sorts. Both were awarded Silver Beavers by the BSA, back in the mid 1930s. My uncle maintained a large library for the boys at Camp Sangamon and it included, as I very well remember, for I spent six happy summers there, FRANK MERRIWELL, TOM SWIFT, ROVER BOYS, BOY ALLIES, JERRY TODD and many Ralphson, Carter and Payson books as well as lots of Fitzhugh. He obviously did not share Mathiews' feelings.

A third example on the non-influence of Mathiews on responsible adults was my neighbor, Warner A. Graham, a distinguished lawyer, active in support of Scouting and a Vermont Supreme Court Judge. A Christmas gift to his son one year was Howard Garis's DICK HAMILTON'S TOURING CAR (published by the Stratemeyer Syndicate of course). We loved him for it.

In this same period (late '20s and early '30s) Troop 1, Bellows Falls, Vermont, had a Scout cabin for campouts and Scouting activities and of course we had a library. I'm afraid Mr. Mathiews would have been dismayed. There were TOM SLADES and as I noted earlier I particularly remember the TOM SLADE war stories. There were also *good* books (meaning we liked them better) such as TOM SWIFT and a host of non-BSA approved titles. And we read them all and our brains weren't blown out and we went on to read other things and appreciate them, too.

There is a final point I'd like to make which seems to have been overlooked by Franklin K. Mathiews as well as other reformers. The point is this—that rather than being so concerned with stylistic niceties and nuances of plot and grammar which are supposed to distinguish between acceptable and non-acceptable fare for boys, critics should pay more at-



tention to basic human dignity and equality among races. I have documented elsewhere the rather horrible stereotypes found in well written, well bound and well respected juveniles of such writers as Booth Tarkington and Frank R. Stockton.<sup>101</sup> However, in this discussion of the Mathiews/West insistence on acceptable authors it hits much closer.

Let me give examples from two important Scouting writers, Fitzhugh himself and Irving Crump. Fitzhugh, to the best of my recollection, portrayed no Black Scouts and few Blacks of any sort in his Scout books. This is perhaps fortunate, for in his 1919 history, *FROM APPOMATTOX TO GERMANY*, Fitzhugh's white hat, if he had one, turned a rusty black. Referring to the period after the Civil War we find such statements as: "Most startling of all and hardest for the Southerners to comprehend was the horde of irresponsible negroes who were roaming over the land, taunting their former masters, insulting their former mistresses, and revisiting the grief-stricken and impoverished homes of their old owners to pilfer and assert their new rights by every sort of viciousness and excess. When we think of the wide-spread scorn of the negro in the South it is well to remember these things."<sup>102</sup>

He is equally definite about the "poor whites": "These people were naturally lazy and had no ambition to rise. They were, and still are, among the most ignorant and shiftless people to be found among civilized nations. They do not live, they simply exist. Andrew Johnson, the 'Reconstruction President,' was of the poor whites. If the country had been searched from end to end, it would have been difficult to find a man less fitted for this perplexing task."<sup>103</sup> I will spare you most of his description of "poor whites" who "dragged out an aimless existence, drinking raw whiskey, smoking corn-cob pipes, and raising large families of hapless and wretched children."

The one story which is really disgraceful for a man like Fitzhugh is this: After a series of incidents in the village of Bradleigh, "The negroes rose in a frenzy against the planters, demanding fabulous sums for their past services and shooting or striking down those who refused to pay." A noble white youth "requisitioned" a horse and dashed to the nearest plantation, eleven miles distant. "He knew that unless someone acted, this carnival of riot and murder would end in wholesale massacre." He made it to the plantation of course, though with much trouble. "There were no Boy Scouts of America in those days, but LeRoy was a good scout, for all of that. The 'stunt' would have raised him out of the tenderfoot class before any local council in all this wide land in these later days of Boy Scouting. For he had done the good turn and had been resourceful."<sup>104</sup> And why did he do this? So that the Ku Klux Klan could come to the rescue. "In a very few minutes there emerged from the house a white-shrouded man, who lighted a great cross and held it aloft as he mounted a waiting horse." The Klan collected a hundred white-robed figures with flaming crosses and rode back to Bradleigh. "The negroes knew well enough what it all meant. It was an army of ghosts. And never did any triumph of the great war call forth greater plaudits than went up on that dreadful night when the invincible Ku-Klux Klan came to the rescue of the little town of Bradleigh." Our white boy hero "accompanied them (the Klan) as they stalked from house to house, dragging forth the terrified negroes and marching them off, each between two white-robed Klansmen, to a fate of which no one ever learned."<sup>105</sup>

This is a greatly condensed account of Fitzhugh's statements about negroes, the KKK, carpetbaggers and Reconstruction Times. From the way he wrote you would have thought Sherman had personally rolled over Fitzhugh on his trip to Atlanta. Since this book was printed by Harper & Brothers

on the finest of paper and was attractively bound and since Fitzhugh wrote Boy Scout books for another twelve years we can only assume Mathiews and the Editorial Board of the Boy Scouts approved of it and felt it was fine literature.

Irving Crump was Editor of *Boys' Life* for 25 years and the author of numerous books and short stories for boys. Some of his most popular books were the OG stories, books about cave boys, 500,000 years ago. In OG-SON OF FIRE (1936) it is noted on the title page that Irving Crump was "Editor, *Boys' Life*, The Boy Scouts' Magazine." In this book there is a great deal of conflict between the "hairy people" and the "tree people." The tree people were great cowards and had never "had the courage to attack even one hairy man, let alone beat him in conquest and carry him off." Even though the tree people do capture Og temporarily they are obviously inferior and who they are is made terribly clear on page 119. "Og knew that his skin was a yellowish white. The skin under the hair of the tree people was dark; in truth it was quite black...this was the key to the whole mystery, and this difference in skin color marked the ape man as a different race, a race that even at that early date was still thousands of years behind his own people. Nor could he understand that a million years hence, when his race should have achieved the heights of civilization, the offsprings of the tree people would still be savages."<sup>106</sup>

Now do we really think it is better to have boys' attitudes shaped for life by such "good reading" as this than it is to have the Boys' Brains blown out by too much excitement in TOM SWIFT? Critics are apparently critical of different things. I sincerely believe that Mathiews not only had very limited critical judgment in the juvenile field but that he was a single-minded fanatic, much on the order of Comstock. It seems clear from the evidence that he was about as ruthless as his boss, James E. West, in trying to achieve his goals and I consider it fortunate that enough more reasonable adults, including adult Scouters as well as the juvenile reading population, rejected the Mathiews-BSA censorship campaign.

Stratemeyer was as convinced of the value of his books as Mathiews was convinced otherwise. Stratemeyer's sales continued to rise and the children loved his books. So perhaps it was a book war or perhaps it was a minor skirmish. On balance, I consider the rewards of Mathiews' attempts to "guide" boys' reading to be hardly worth the effort and certainly not worthy of the Boy Scouts of America. It seems to me that Edward Stratemeyer's hat was a great deal whiter, after the fray, than that of Franklin K. Mathiews, Chief Librarian of the Boy Scouts of America.

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## JOSEPH E. BADGER'S PORTRAYAL OF THE GHOST DANCE IN BEADLE DIME NOVELS

By James L. Evans

The University of Texas—Pan American

For more than twenty years Joseph E. Badger, Jr. (1849-1909), had a good relationship with the Beadle Company, which published more than 200 of his dime novels, mostly in either the Dime Library series or the Half-Dime Library series. He used a great diversity of settings, and he often took an incident of American history and created stories about it. These stories, though typical dime-novel fiction with all kinds of action and suspense, are based on actual events and give the reader much historical information. Four such dime novels are the ones dealing with the Ghost Dance among the Sioux Indians in South Dakota in 1890. These stories in the Half-Dime Library series run to about 40,000 words each.

Before we discuss these four dime novels, let's consider a brief history of the Ghost Dance that partially led to the Battle of Wounded Knee.

In early 1890, Wovoka, a Paiute Indian in Nevada, circulated the tale of the coming Indian Messiah. Wovoka had been influenced by the teachings of his medicine-man father, of the Christian family that had adopted him, and of nearby Mormons. In early 1890, this 35 year-old, handsome, intelligent, articulate Indian suffered a fever and during it had a vision of Heaven. It was a place of only Indians where no one grew old and no one suffered from illness or hunger. Wovoka announced that a Messiah would wipe all white men off the American continent and return the land to Indians. All Indians could enjoy this Heaven if they followed a few simple rules. Word of his religion spread quickly among the tribes west of the Mississippi, and in the spring of 1890 delegates from numerous tribes went to Nevada to learn about the religion. Wovoka taught them the principles of it. They must be virtuous, honest, and above all peaceful. In short, his rules were almost identical to those of the Ten Commandments. Also, the Indians must dance a Ghost Dance which he taught them. The dancers' faces were painted with circles, crescents, crosses, eagles, and buffaloes. Colors varied, but red for the sun was used on all. None of the body was painted, and the dancers were to be fully clothed. The Ghost Shirt was the most important feature. It also had designs important in Indian mythology. Wovoka said that nothing of white manufacture was to be worn during the dance; there were to be no guns, no jewelry, and no belts from the whites. The delegates returned to their own tribes with this information. Many Indians accepted the teachings, some readily and some less so. Because of all the sufferings the Indians had endured from the whites, many Indians believed that a just Deity would bring revenge and/or justice.

Problems from the dance resulted primarily among the various branches of the Sioux tribe. Some historians have believed that if the federal government had restored the usual rations to the Sioux in 1890 and/or if the summer weather had aided in the production of good harvests, the Ghost Dance would have run its course and been forgotten. Unlike other tribes, the Sioux rejected the idea of avoiding violence. Some Sioux felt that a Messiah bringing about good things for the Indians was entitled to their assistance in killing off whites. And many Sioux began to carry weapons, usually of white manufacture, during the ghost dances. Also, among the Sioux, the Ghost Shirt was decreed to be bulletproof. They contended that the shirt—though usually only an ornamented sacklike garment—would repel bullets and would repel them back to the whites who fired them.

Among the Sioux, various Indian agents panicked at the continual



dancing. Mission groups did not realize that the religion differed from Christianity primarily in the form of rituals, and they also became alarmed and sometimes resentful of its success in teaching what they had failed to teach. And Sitting Bull, the celebrity of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, was back on the reservation and a cause of fear among whites. Accounts of Sitting Bull's attitude toward the Messiah are conflicting. Apparently many persons assume that the dance was a dangerous thing to the whites and thus Sitting Bull was naturally for it. Many authorities, however, think that he was skeptical of the new religion; nevertheless, he did not—maybe could not—prevent the desperate, hungry Sioux from dancing.

And of much significance is the fact that some Indians and some half-bloods of the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation area were paid by politicians working with cattlemen eager to red the area of all Indians in order to open the land for whites. They helped make the Ghost Dance seem to the whites to be preparations for war.

On December 15, 1890, some 43 Indian police were sent to arrest Sitting Bull and bring him to Fort Yates. With perhaps no intention of taking him alive, two policemen shot Sitting Bull and killed him. There was then no real Sioux leader. After his death, many Sioux headed to the Badlands, intending to make their last attack on the whites. Many others surrendered and were killed at the massacre on Wounded Knee Creek in southwestern South Dakota on December 30, 1890. Besides the loss of many lives, the battle was quite significant because it proved that the Ghost Shirts were not bulletproof. Whites anticipated another Indian outbreak in the spring of 1891, but this did not materialize. One major reason was that many Sioux believed that the promised day of resurrection (when a cloud or other phenomenon would remove all whites) could come within the next few months and thus there was no need for further fighting. Anyway, the religion was soon discarded.

We will now consider Joseph Badger's four dime novels on this topic. They are #723, #729, #739, and #748 in the Beadle Half-Dime Library. All were written and published in 1891, shortly after the events happened and while memories of them were still fresh in the minds of all Americans. The four are really one story, with most characters appearing in all the novels, but of course each is complete in itself.

Though the story takes place in Sioux territory with many Sioux in the background, most characters are very good white men acting as individuals and having the superman abilities and incredible good luck of typical dime novel heroes or very evil whites who are members of gangs. The major character is Silverblade, a half-Shoshone, half-white. His father is Luke Woodbridge, a successful, but aging white farmer living in northern North Dakota with his sickly wife (a full-blood Shoshone) and his teenage daughter Enola, or Little Sure Shot. Silverblade, whose white name is David Woodbridge, is an intelligent, athletic man of 21 with the physical and spiritual virtues of both Indians and whites, but he is constantly aware of being in limbo and not a part of either race. As he states in the last novel, "I am neither dog nor wolf, but a poor, miserable mongrel." (748-6-2) (Throughout this article the source of each quotation is listed in parentheses immediately after it; the numbers designate the number of the dime novel, pages, and column. In case no location is shown for a quotation, it is from the same column as the immediately previous quotation.) Shortly before the first story opens, Silverblade has just returned from the white man's school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and learned of the Ghost Dance craze which was then beginning to take hold.

The first story is #723, SILVER BLADE, THE SHOSHONE, OR; THE BORDER BEAGLE'S SECRET MISSION: A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT CRAZE. Here we meet some

good white characters who continue through all four stories, and we immediately learn of Silverblade's uncertainty about life and about himself. It is autumn 1890. As the story opens, Max Donaldson, who is a cowboy working for Silverblade's father and an admirer of Silverblade's sister, appears among a group of ghost dancers. He knows that somewhere in the camp of dancers is David (Silverblade), and Max has come to persuade or force David home to visit his seriously ill mother. Here Max sees and talks to Buck Horton, a longtime white detective in the area and friend of the Woodbridge family. Buck Horton knows the West quite well and is always a hero, whether saving Silverblade or capturing evil whites. He is the most important character in the series other than David; he is middle-aged; his character is fully developed when the stories begin, and he is there for the physical safety of Silverblade and to help the author develop Silverblade's maturity. Buck Horton knows several Indian languages and is at home among most Indian groups. He is not prejudiced against Indians, but the four stories deal largely with his struggles to persuade the Shoshone youth to give up his Indian ways. The author makes clear at the beginning that the most evil characters are white men dressed as Indians who are claiming to be "mouthpieces" of the Messiah. Many Indians in the story are bad because they are misled by evil whites wanting Indians to scare off the settlers; thus, the Indians will be blamed and removed so that the land can then be sold cheaply to other whites.

In the first page, one person in costume speaking to a group of Shoshones in their language announces himself as the Messiah's "mouthpiece." He is assumed to be an Indian. Here, as repeatedly through the four novels, Badger creates a realistic atmosphere by describing the dancers and the dance. Regarding Silverblade's face, the author says: "The ground color was black, with an indigo tinge. On chin and forehead showed a crescent drawn in light blue, while each cheek bore a cross of brightest vermillion." (723-2-2) And Silverblade wore a tiara of eagle feathers—Wovoka had said they would enable one to fly to heaven. The author also refers to the "fantastically painted shirt" with each of its emblems having its own meaning, but these meanings were known only to the fully initiated.

The "mouthpiece" begs the Indians to accept the Messiah. Numerous Indians are reluctant, but only Silverblade openly questions the "mouthpiece." Silverblade's first word, as spoken to him: "If there be a Messiah, and he is all you claim for him, why does he not speak direct to us, since we are his beloved children?" (723-2-3) The so-called mouthpiece, unknown to any of the Indians to be a white man in disguise, asks: "You are the son of a pure-blood Shoshone, Silverblade; why, then, do you speak with the tongue of the hated pale-faces?" The man continues by saying that only those elected by the Messiah are to know his words. He then states: "The Messiah told me, and bade me make it known to all in whose veins f[lowed] the blood of the red-man, that his mission was to restore the whole earth to the Indian and the buffalo. He told me that the entire earth should once more be peopled by vast tribes of red-men, and that all the dead warriors and chiefs and squaws and papooses should be restored to life, with each one a thousand fat buffalo for their own." (723-2-1) He continued with other details about the good things to come. Silverblade wanted to believe the man. After listening to the speech, the detective Buck Horton told the Woodbridge cowboy that "the only imp down yonder who doesn't religiously believe every word of that rot is the medicine-man himself!"

Apart from the crowd, Silverblade asks the "mouthpiece" individually if the Messiah did not give some token by which they would know the true prophet and how the Indians could believe the teachings without seeing.



The "mouthpiece" answers by saying the Shoshones were to believe by faith—as the Sioux, Cheyenne, Navahoes, and other tribes had done.

Still Silverblade is not entirely convinced. Then, Max—the Woodbridge cowboy—tries again to persuade Silverblade to come home to see his ailing mother. And there follows a long discussion with such words as, "Your mother is sick, I tell you...Your mother called to you nearly all last night, in her delirium, and now—you'll come home Davie, lad?" (723-4-1) And Silverblade answers with, "I have no *home*, no mother, no kindred now...I can do nothing until the coming of the Messiah!" In the discussion, Silverblade continues talking to cowboy Max with such ideas as, "Is there not good cause for his [Messiah's] coming? Have not his red children borne the heavy burden long enough? Are they forever to remain slaves, worse than dogs, under the heel of the cursed white man?" Silverblade says that his own father, like all whites, has been warned and should flee beyond the broad ocean to the land of the whites before all members of the white race are destroyed.

In this conversation between Cowboy Max and Silverblade, the cowboy also mentions John Godfrey, an occasional loiterer at the Woodbridge ranch eager to marry Silverblade's sister, but not for love. And at the end of this chapter detective Horton refers to the "mouthpiece" as a "vile trickster" and says to David: "Ask your prophet to show you what lies under that mask of paint. Whisper the name of Zeno—" (723-4-2) Zeno is the name of John Godfrey's father.

In the next pages the story of the Ghost Dance and of Silverblade goes slowly. In a scene among white villains at their hideout, John Godfrey says Woodbridge has much cash under his roof from a recent sale of cattle; the bad men mention that an Indian war is certain before snowfall, that Silverblade will be killed, and Godfrey can get the ranch and daughter in gratitude for rescuing her from an Indian attack which they will stir up. The white villains mention their need to cause more dancing so their own raids on ranches will be blamed on dancing Indians.

Soon Luke Woodbridge, the father, leaves his ranch to find his son and persuade him to come back to see his mother. In an Indian camp at night, the father sees some Indians dancing and others exhausted and sleeping. Among the figures he finds his son, "hideously painted, wildest of the wild, a picture which filled his heart with savage grief." (723-13-1) Silverblade agrees to go home briefly. On the way, the father and son talk about white blood versus red, and the father questions his son about many things. Finally Silverblade says he has tried to have faith in the Messiah: "I know the doctrine he preaches is pure and perfect, but—I can't feel as sure of the mouthpiece." (734-14-1) Father then tells Silverblade that the man is John Godfrey. Silverblade comes home to see his mother and sister, but before the next nightfall, he leaves again to seek the Messiah. In the coming days he will seek the Messiah "with heart full of trust, of perfect faith, in no wise lessened by the exposure of one lying 'mouthpiece.'" (723-15-3)

In #729, SILVERBLADE, THE HALF-BLOOD, is perhaps the best and most detailed picture of the Ghost Dance, of the confused Silverblade torn between the white and red race, the roles of evil whites in misleading Indians to participate in the Ghost Dance, and the interrelationships of these factors.

It begins with Red Leaf, a self-proclaimed mouthpiece, speaking to nearly a score of warriors and chiefs of various tribes. Red Leaf sounds the drum and begins to tell of his seeing and hearing the Messiah. Soon some of the unconvinced Indians ask why they can't also see and hear the real Messiah instead of only a "mouthpiece." And Silverblade says: "Only

fools and babes believe *all* the hear,...Wise men ask to *know* before they can *believe*." (729-2-2) Red Leaf, who is really Zeno Godfrey, is angered and announces to the others that the questioner is only a half-breed, a white man. But upon insistence from several Indians, Red Leaf agrees to take the Indians to see the Messiah. He then leads them to the foot of a high rocky cliff a mile away. There he builds a large fire to attract his partners concealed in caves in the cliff. From atop the rocks, a voice says: "I am here" (729-3-1) and asks what is wanted. Silverblade asks to see the real Messiah who has given them the message. Then with the use of fires at different places on the cliff, Red Leaf's comrades create illusions. Lights appear, partially fade, totally fade, and then reappear throughout the encounter.

"Then came the change for which the Indians were watching; for, upon that illuminated column, a human figure was growing, dim and ghostly at first, but gradually gaining body and outlines, until all eyes could make out the form of an aged man, with long hair and full beard of snowy whiteness, wearing a gray blanket after the Indian fashion, the folds meeting beneath his right arm, leaving that bared member free for use or gestulation." (729-3-2)

Silverblade is still reluctant to believe in the Messiah. He says he is no longer a white man but has followed the white man's road and knows there can be trickery when so much land is at stake. Finally the shape persuades Silverblade to shoot it and see that it is immortal. He shoots three times, the spectral shape increases in size, and he then believes in the Messiah. The shape then gives his message: "When the chosen day dawns, the Messiah will come to his red children, and his strong hand will lift them up, clear of the earth, beyond all danger. And as his voice gives the signal, a mighty wave of melted rocks shall sweep over this land, from salt water to salt water, burying beneath its might every white-face,...So the Great Spirit hath said, and so his son now tells you!" (729-5-1)

An Indian who had once been to Washington and knew of the great number of whites then asks if there would be further fighting. And the shape answers: "Not after the Messiah comes with the deathsong upon his lips. Before that...there may be fighting. There *will* be fighting...And while that fighting lasts, many will die, both of white and red people." The shape then repeats the story the Indians had heard before: "The pale faces will stay dead, but when the Messiah calls, each one who wore a red skin in life, will return from the grave, to live again. I tell you this, my children, and the Messiah knows not how to lie!" Then the light on the hill fades, and the figure seems "to melt into air."

After the group returns from the hillside, Red Leaf tells the Indians that the first fighting will be among "the great Sioux people." (729-5-2) Red Leaf adds that Sitting Bull represents the Messiah and is the one to give orders to all believers. When the crowd disperses, Red Leaf in another disguise makes his way to the rocks on the hillside where his comrades in crime have presented the scene. These white men each know several Indian languages, they can disguise their voices to sound similar to each other, and all are of similar physique—thus, the gang of evil whites can take turns playing roles among the Indians.

Two days later the chiefs are again with Red Leaf, who orders them to deliver the Messiah's message to their respective followers and then to go to Sitting Bull for orders. In this section there are numerous references to Sitting Bull, but very little is actually shown of him in any of the four dime novels.

The chiefs talk among themselves. Some point out that the Messiah



had said many Indians would be killed before he came; and they therefore wonder why they should drag their people to a faraway battlefield to be killed. Silverblade, now the fanatic believer, responds: "Because the Messiah commands!...Because—" (729-7-1) Others interrupt to remind him he is only a boy, a white boy at that, and if the Messiah will come anyway, it is foolish to take their people starving through freezing snow to be slaughtered by whites. After Chief Lean Bull says he will explain the situation to his people and let them decide whether to fight uselessly, he tauntingly says to Silverblade: "If the half-blood papoose thinks *his* voice is loudest, let him stand up by the side of a *chief*, and our people will choose between us." (729-7-2) Angry, Silverblade jumps on his horse and heads to Sitting Bull's camp far away. En route, he encounters Buck Horton. Again they have their usual discussions. Buck tries to convert Silverblade to white ways, and Silverblade again makes his usual comments such as: "There is no David here. I am Silverblade, the Ghost Dancer." (729-10-3) Silverblade tells Horton that when the bullets failed to kill the Messiah, then the last drop of white blood went out of his body.

Meanwhile, some of the white gang go to the ranch of John Dancer, a once-savage Cheyenne but now noble half-blood married to a white woman. The whites plan to scatter his livestock and let the animals be acquired by stray hostile Indians who will be blamed for the raid. Typical dime novel events and incredible coincidences enable the good guys to prevent the gang's plans from being carried out, however.

The last chapter of the second novel in the series is at the camp of Sitting Bull, who is labeled by the author as "the crafty old sinner." (729-15-2) The camp is in an area surrounded by a river and low hills. In the center is the medicine-pole of the Ghost Dancers. Again the author describes the appearance of the dancers; concerning Sitting Bull, he writes: "His face also bears the mystic symbols of the society of ghost dancers. A deep blue-black groundwork, on each cheek a red cross, on chin and forehead a blue crescent, while in his long hair are white, fluffy feathers of the eagle; pure white from tip to stem, for these are not the painted eagle-plumes worn by warriors, but the badge of the secret society known far and wide as Ghost Dancers." (729-15-2)

The dancers form in line and pause before an assistant prophet who imprints each cheek with a red cross; next they go into the lodge where Sitting Bull adds the blue crescents. After leaving his tent, they join in a slowly-growing circle waiting for Sitting Bull's signal to begin their daily dance which continues for each Indian until exhausted. The Indian drum is set in motion; "faster and faster...the voice of Sitting Bull breaks forth in a guttural chant," and each Ghost Dancer begins his own chant. Silverblade is among them.

In SILVERBLADE, THE HALF-BLOOD, David Woodbridge gives up all white ways and becomes a full-blooded red man dancing the Ghost Dance to aid Sitting Bull in hastening the coming of the Indian Messiah.

SILVERBLADE, THE HOSTILE, #739, was published in September, 1891. At night Buck Horton, disguised as an Indian, appears at Sitting Bull's camp, looking for Silverblade among the sleeping Indians who are "worn and weary" after dancing daily from noonday till dark for nearly three months. Buck finds him and again tries to lure him away from the Ghost Craze and back to his parents to stay. Silverblade gives his typical response, by saying: "Silverblade is red—all red." (739-3-1) Horton tells him that many soldiers are coming into the region, the military will soon intervene, and Silverblade must think of the future. Silverblade again mentions his faith in the Messiah; he again mentions that he had shot the Messiah three times without harming him.

For the next few pages there is little action, and there are more discussions between Horton and Silverblade. The scene then shifts to a camp of Indian police, happy in their role of the U.S. government with brass buttons and bits of government uniform. They are under orders from the Army officer to arrest Sitting Bull, and they are eager to kill him. He is scheduled to lead some Indians to the Badlands the next day to make their last great stand against the whites before the Messiah comes. As in real life, the lieutenant of the Indian police and one of the others shoot Sitting Bull, one in the head and one in the body. He falls dead, and the Sioux are without a leader. The police take charge and fire at persons near Sitting Bull's cabin. Most surviving Indians flee, but Silverblade rushes into the midst of the action. He is the only one courageous enough, foolish enough, or misguided enough not to fear. He is wounded. The scene is vividly described with a picture of his red blood marking the spot in the white snow where he fell. Indians comment about the slaying of Sitting Bull. Perhaps expressing the idea of many, Gray Eagle says, "him big fool" because he had not bothered to wear the Ghost Shirt to repel white men's bullets. (739-5-2)

A girl, Little Bird, nurses Silverblade back to health, and she insists to him that Red Leaf "is *not* red—he is *white*, a *dirty* white, like muddy snow!" (739-8-1) She adds: "Would a *real* Messiah choose a bad heart? Is there no *good* Indian through whose lips his words may come? For—Red Leaf is all Bad! Red Leaf is a liar, a dog that howls lies!"

Afraid that the loss of Sitting Bull and the lack of a leader might cause the Sioux to become inactive, the gang of villainous whites decide to frighten the Indians and thereby make them appear dangerous. They do so by creating the ghost of Sitting Bull to replace the Messiah on the hilltop. Not only are Indians startled by the appearance of Sitting Bull's ghost, but also farmers report to the military of having seen it, having shot at it without phasing it, and being frightened by it. And Horton, who is forever reappearing in the story when needed, secures authority from the military to capture the ghost of Sitting Bull. While hiding in a cave on a cold night, Horton sees five white villains hidden in the other part of it. Each, if in costume, resembles Sitting Bull enough to pass for him at a distance. Each had been appearing on various hillsides as Sitting Bull's ghost. Soon Silverblade is among a group of Indians that see the ghost of Sitting Bull against a hillside with his hand pointing to the Badlands. The Indians run, not towards the Badlands, but nearer the ghost of Sitting Bull. The image drops his blanket, and raises his naked arms, and the Indians exclaim: "Sitting Bull! 'Tis the ghost of Sitting Bull!" (739-10-2) Most of the Indian—afraid, confused, amazed—then move backward. Only Silverblade goes closer to it. The shape says that eternal life awaits them in the Badlands. He speaks: "Strike; and strike to kill! Sweep the accursed pale-faces out of the trail, and fear naught! Is not Sitting Bull with ye? And Sitting Bull dead, is the Messiah living!"

The shape—or Messiah—or ghost of Sitting Bull—performs pantomimes with warclub and scalping knife. He points to the Badlands again and says: "—yonder lies the land of promise! In the Bad Lands the fight must be fought, the victory won,...Though he may not show himself to your eyes in the sunlight, Sitting Bull will ever lead the way, and before his laugh the Blue Coats shall be as harmless weeds! Before his breath their bullets shall turn aside and do no harm to the red-man! Their long knives shall crumble like dry dirt before his war-club! Their—" (739-10-3) His sentence is stopped by the sound of a revolver. Indians are bewildered. Wasn't he immortal? Only Silverblade dares go close enough to touch the



shape of Sitting Bull's ghost. He tears open the shirt and sees that the bullet has penetrated the body which is that of a white man.

Angry, embittered, and violent for being deceived, Silverblade looks for Red Leaf, who knows that an investigation will follow and intends to stab Silverblade. But miraculously, and as the reader should expect, Buck Horton intercedes at that moment, grabs Red Leaf's hand, and saves Silverblade. We learn that Running Bear, an Indian employed by Horton, has shot the ghost—who is a member of the white gang. In the general confusion that follows—including hand-to-hand combat between Silverblade and Red Leaf, someone buries a knife to its hilt in Red Leaf's back. And the villainous Red Leaf, who of course is Zeno Godfrey, recklessly tears away his mask. Resentful of the other members of his own gang who survive, and partly to give information to the reader, Zeno confesses all. He tells that he had been one of the whites hired to spread the Ghost Dance craze and that he had helped convert Silverblade to a false Messiah. He tells that as a last resort, he and his gang had created the trick of Sitting Bull's ghost.

Silverblade is disillusioned. It is now obvious to him that the mouthpieces were villainous whites, and most Sioux also realize the truth. He resolves to become a Friendly Indian and to follow the white man's way. The next day that entire band of Sioux, along with Silverblade, realize they have no choice and start to the Army camp to surrender.

Last in the series is #748, SILVERBLADE, THE FRIENDLY. This story seems to be the weakest of the four. But it does describe the slaughter at Wounded Knee, and shows that Silverblade matures and becomes a friendly peacemaker. It begins on Wounded Knee Creek. With no signs that the Ghost Dance had ever existed, the hostile Sioux are now under their new chief, Big Foot, but they have surrendered to soldiers of the 7th Cavalry who were eager for revenge for the defeat of Custer back in 1876. The white soldiers demand the surrender of all Indian guns, but only Silverblade and one other Indian surrender any. An officer orders all lodges searched. Only minutes after the search begins, "a crack-brained young fellow,—only a short time from one of the Indian schools—" (748-2-2) gives a wild cry, scoops up a handful of dirt, and throws it at a soldier. At this signal 160 braves instantly drop their blankets revealing their concealed weapons. On both sides the shooting begins, and the slaughter is vividly described. In the heavy smoke from burning lodges, the soldiers cannot distinguish between bucks, squaws, and children, and they kill all indiscriminately. 70-80 whites and more than 150 Sioux are slain. When Silverblade cries, "Peace! Peace!" someone strikes him unconscious. While coming to, he sees the wounded Little Bird, who had nursed him to health earlier. In her last sentence, she begs him to become all white. Later two evil white men appear and lasso Silverblade because he is "jest an Injun." Buck Horton of course appears and saves Silverblade, who, now a friendly peacemaker, pleads that the evil men's lives will be spared. While Silverblade and Horton are again hiding in a cave, Silverblade meditates about himself and admits that his mind was poisoned at school and he returned just in time for the Messiah—"that infernal fraud." Silverblade laments the mistakes of his past and says he will now forever be known as Silverblade, the Peacemaker. Horton expresses his preference for the name David, which was given by his parents. Silverblade accepts, saying, "I am David Woodbridge now!" (748-15-3) and adds he is going home to his people a better man than when he left "to follow a lying vision."

The dime novel concludes and lays the basis for a possible sequel with Silverblade's words to Horton: "Unless the Sioux are treated with more humanity, 'there is sure to be fresh trouble when grass sprouts,'"



and he mentions that in the conflict he will serve for peace. The post-script by the author does tell whom cowboy Max and some other characters will eventually marry but mentions that at that time—March 30, 1891—it was too early to guess about further troubles and the activities of Horton and Silverblade. There was no further uprising by Sioux in the spring. If there had been, surely Badger would have written a fifth dime novel about Silverblade. So we are left without knowing what happens in the adult life of Silverblade.

These stories were surely popular when they appeared in 1891. Badger was a major writer with more than two hundred dime novels already published by Beadle, and the topics of the Ghost Dance Craze and Wounded Knee had been in the news during recent months.

My historical research has not revealed any mention of a half-blood Shoshone named Silverblade nor of the appearance of the ghost of Sitting Bull. But the basis of these stories closely corresponds to historical facts. Details of the Ghost Dance, the militant role of the Sioux in rejecting Wovoka's teachings to be peaceful, the role of some evil whites in causing trouble to be blamed on Indians, suffering caused by crop failures in 1890, conflicts among Indians over whether to accept the Messiah—are all based on fact. Always the personal psychological problems of half-bloods torn between two races were common in the West. And Indians, or part Indians, who had experienced the white man's boarding schools were left confused in a no-man's world. Such a fictional character as Silverblade is very realistic with his confusion, his sudden fanaticism, and his later change of mind. The character Silverblade—the half-Shoshone, half white—is used very effectively in Joseph E. Badger's four dime novels about the Ghost Dance Craze among the Sioux: SILVERBLADE, THE SHOSHONE; OR, THE BORDER BEAGLE'S SECRET MISSION.\* A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT CRAZE. ½DL #723, June 2, 1891; SILVERBLADE, THE HALF-BLOOD; OR, THE BORDER BEAGLE AT BAY. ½DL #729, July 14, 1891; SILVERBLADE, THE HOSTILE; OR, THE BORDER BEAGLE'S GHOST TRAIL. ½DL #739, September 22, 1891; SILVERBLADE, THE FRIENDLY; OR, THE BORDER BEAGLE'S BOY PARD. ½DL #748, November 24, 1891.

\*In all four dime novels, Buck Horton is occasionally referred to as the Border Beagle, but that name is not especially significant.

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